

THE QUIVER

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(Drawn by G. J. PINWELL.)

"Will you go to church, if father takes ninepence?"—p. 274.

"SALLY IN OUR ALLEY."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL."

SHE is before me at this moment, as I first saw her.

When she came to the door of the little room behind her father's stall or shed, which he called

his workshop, with her left hand concealed by a woollen sock she was darning, I can compare her to nothing but a sudden ray of sunshine streaming into a dark passage.

"What do you want?" said she, smiling.

"Please, miss, do you think Mr. Sayers will mend this boot for ninepence?"

"Let me see," said Sally, taking it out of my hand. "Father is out. Why, this is a bad job."

"I know the toes are out," said I.

"And the heel completely gone," said Sally.

"I should say you wanted a new pair of boots."

"Wanting and having are different things, miss," said I.

"They are so," said Sally, looking at me from head to foot, and then looking grave. But smiling was natural to her—she was soon at it again.

"Who are you?" said she.

"I'm Bob, over the way. Bob Andrews. Up three pair of stairs."

"I don't know your face."

"No; we only came lately. We came from a better place. We've been getting lower and lower."

"Till at last you've come to where I am," said she, smiling again. "What brought you so low?"

"Father drank, miss," said I, softly. "And now he's dead; and mother's ill, and can't work."

"That's a bad job," said Sally, returning to her grave look. "Drink brings many a man lower and lower."

"Oh! it do, miss."

"You needn't 'miss' me at every word. Do you go to school?"

"I've just begun to go to the night-school. A gentleman came and asked me."

"And you want your boots mended to go to church?"

I hung my head, and said, "I can't go there."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm not fit."

"Oh! but that's no reason. Doesn't the gentleman tell you to go?"

"Yes; and I said I couldn't, because of my boots; so he gave me ninepence, and that's all I have."

"Soling a boot costs a shilling," said Sally, musing. "And will you go to church, if father takes ninepence?"

I hesitated, and said, "I'm so shabby all over."

"But if the kind gentleman that teaches you for nothing wishes you to go, and my father mends your boot for ninepence that you may go, and yet you stay away, won't that be shabby all over?"

I felt it would be, yet did not say, only looked wistful. Sally looked at me reproachfully.

"I know nobody would sit next me," said I, at length.

"Pooh, pooh!" said Sally; "I'd sit next you."

"Would you though, miss?" said I, looking her full in the face, and feeling hot all over. "Oh! do you really mean it?"

"You poor boy!" exclaimed Sally; "to be sure I mean what I say. We go to church to please God, and he is no respecter of persons. If we thought him so, we should be shabby all over. Here, give me your boot. I do believe you've one of your mother's old shoes on in its stead."

"She's in bed, and doesn't want it."

"And what do *you* want to have your boots mended for, if not to go to church?"

"To get a place."

"A place?" repeated Sally, doubtfully.

"Yes. Then, when I'd earned money to buy decent clothes, I'd go to church."

"Hum. But, Bobby, if you went to church first, and asked God to get you a place, very likely he would."

"Do you think so, miss?" said I, joyfully.

"Yes, I do; and you'd better try."

"But wouldn't he, if I asked him by my own bedside?" said I.

"Well, that's a good question of yours," said Sally. "The lady at the tea-meeting, last night, reminded us that God hears us in secret, and rewards us openly. But then, to be rewarded, you must do what's right; and if God is so very good as to answer your prayer for a place, you ought to go and thank him for it in his own house, without minding what people think of you. Don't you see?"

"If you won't mind, I won't mind," said I, after a pause.

"Very well—agreed!" said Sally. "You come here on Saturday night—that's to-morrow—and you shall have your boot; and then, on Sunday morning, clean yourself up a bit, and wait for me at the end of the alley, when the bells begin to ring, and I'll go to church with you; for father lies in bed on Sunday mornings."

"Do you mean when the second bell goes?"

"No, the first; then we'll slip in before many people have the start of us, and I'll put you between me and the wall, in one of the free seats. You may go now. Good-bye."

She gave me a cheerful nod, and I went away very happy.

This was the first I saw of Sally; and I leave you to judge if I liked her or not. When I went home, I could not help standing in a dark corner on the stairs, and whispering, "O God! I'm so glad I've been to Sally! Do, please, find me a place." And often, after that, when it came into my head, I whispered the same, and felt ever so much better for it.

And so I went to church with Sally on Sundays, and to the night-school twice a week; and next week I got a place. At the week's end, Sally said—

"So you've got a place. What do they give you?"

"A shilling a week," I said, "and plenty of licking."

She laughed, and said, "I thought you were going to say, plenty of victuals. Are they God-fearing people?"

"Quite the other way, I think," said I; "but I don't want to misjudge them."

"That's right, Bob," said she. "If they do wrong, do you do right. Perhaps you require licking into shape, like a little bear."

This amused me very much; and the next time the foreman hit me, I said, "All right; maybe I require licking, like a little bear;" which made him laugh so that he did not hit me again for a good while.

But my mother became so ill that I was obliged to give up my place, to wait upon her day and night, for she liked nobody so much as me, and could not afford a hired nurse; and my place was not so good but that I might hope for a better. Mr. Joyce (that's the gentleman at the night-school) called on her and allowed her two shillings a week, and sent in some coals; and Sally took her broth, and now and then some other little matter. But mother died, and I feel sad about it to this day, though having the comfort of thinking she went to a much better place; for she was very fond of hearing me read the Bible to her, and said she knew in whose righteousness to put her trust, and that He would lead her safely across the dark valley.

I got a much better place after that, for I was bigger and stronger now, and more used to work. This enabled me to earn what got me better food; and still I went to the night-school, where there were other strapping lads, as big or bigger than myself, and knowing a pretty deal less. I continued to go to church on Sundays, not always sitting with Sally, because her father had taken to go, owing to her persuasions, and smartened himself up so that you would hardly have known him for the old cobbler in our alley. But in the afternoon I knew I was sure of Sally if I went to church, and this got me into the way of going; and afterwards we would sometimes take a walk together, for I now dressed decently enough not to be ashamed of going with her. We had famous talks together, and used to agree how we should like to see something of the country now and then, and of foreign parts, and the world in general, and wondered what it was like. Once there was a general holiday; all the shops were shut; and she and I and her father had a day of it, and got a good sight of Queen Victoria in all her glory, for whom I have laid on many a heavy stroke since, upon her enemies, though of course she does not know it.

We were all very merry and pleasant together, and I was tall and strong enough now to make way for Sally through the crowd, her father keeping

close in the rear. Once, when we got wedged and could not stir, she said, "That's Fanny Edwards with the pink strings to her bonnet; and that young man is her sweetheart."

"I wish I was yours," said I; "but I know I'm not old enough."

"That's as much as to say I'm too old," said she, laughing. "Well, so I am. Here comes the Queen."

Sorrow follows joy as night follows day. I was suspected of doing something I didn't do, and should never have thought of doing, and could not clear myself, and so lost my place, after getting very hard words, and my master declared he would not give me a character. If my mother had been alive, I should not have done what I then did in my distress, for she would have advised and comforted me; but what could a friendless lad do?—at least, I had no real friend but Sally, and I did not see how she could help me. I was walking sadly along, without knowing what to do, when I noticed some handbills pasted on the walls of a public-house, saying: "Wanted, a few young men of good character." I thought, "I'm a young man of good character, but no one will speak for me. I wonder if they would let me speak for myself." Just then, a hand was clapped on my shoulder, and a deep, jovial voice said, with a strong Irish accent—

"Me fine fellow, will ye like to hear of something to your advantage?"

"Indeed I should," said I, turning round; and then I saw he was a recruiting sergeant.

"Well, then," said he, "let's have a little talk together over a glass of beer."

"I'm a water-drinker," said I; "but I'm quite ready for the talk, if you are so good as to talk to me."

"Of course I am," said he; and then he began to tell me of the good opening there was at that moment in the army for a fine young man like me; and would have gone on ever so long, had there been need of it; but I saved him the trouble by saying, "Can you tell me, sir, how to enlist?"

"To be sure I can, my boy," said he.

"Do you think, sir, they will have me?"

"We'll soon answer that question, when you've been examined."

Then I told him, without the least dissimulation how I had lost my place, and he said it was quite clear to him I had been deprived of it unjustly, which was very comforting. We went indoors, where they measured me and so forth, in a room smelling very strongly of beer and tobacco, and a shilling was clapped into my hand, and thus the first step was taken.

I was very well pleased at it, having no anxious family to dissuade me, and thinking, with some elation, that I was now a member, however unworthy, of the British army.

As soon as preliminaries were got through, and

I was fitted with regimentals, I went to show myself to Sally. She started and looked strange at seeing a soldier; but directly she found it was me, she coloured very red, and said—

"Why, Bob, whatever have you been and done? Have you 'listed?'"

"Yes, I have," said I, and then I told her all the circumstances, and said, "Do you think I've done wrong?"

"I hardly know," said she. "Do you think so, father?"

"No," says her father. "I don't see as the boy could have done better. He'd got no friends, leastways, none that could help him; and now he may make as many as he likes, if he behaves himself."

I said, "There's a gentleman among us," meaning among the recruits.

"Never you mind him," says Mr. Sayers; "most likely he's got into some scrape, or he wouldn't have 'listed. Gentlemen that is gentlemen don't ought to 'list; they buy commissions."

"He may have been unfortunate, though, like Bob," said Sally.

"He may so," said her father; "but what I say to Bob is, don't be too thick with him at first."

"Oh, I'm not thick with him at all," said I; "though I owe him a good turn. As soon as I got into the barrack-room, the men were very kind to me, and one of them offered to introduce me to the canteen-keeper: but Gentleman Jack, as they called him, gave me a nudge, and said, 'If you go to the canteen with them, they'll drink up all your bounty-money;' for which they called him 'Johnny Spoil-sport.'"

"Ha! ha! I dare say they did," said Sayers. "If he's one of the right sort, don't be shy of him, by no means. He's no worse for being a gentleman, though no better; only his tastes may be expensive, or he wouldn't have 'listed; so mind what you're about. Maybe he'll tell you a tale with a tear in his eye, and borrow all your bounty-money in a lump."

I said I did not think he'd do that, and the bounty was not paid in a lump, but by instalments; on which Sayers muttered, "All the better. And now turn yourself about," said he, "and let us look at you completely all round. You've a famous pair of boots, only too big; made by contract, of course: they won't contract your feet. Stuff 'em out with a lock of hay. Humph! he looks uncommon smart, don't he, Sally? Fine feathers make fine birds. Maybe the red coat was the great attraction to him. He thought the girls would like it."

"If one does, that's enough," said I.

"Let me see what sort of a pocket-handkerchief you have," said Sally.

I was rather ashamed to pull it out, and said I had not my kit yet.

"And what do you do, and when will you go to fight?"

I said I had had my first drill, and was soon going, along with some others, to the dépôt battalion, to learn the duty of a soldier.

"What's the first duty of a soldier?" said Mr. Sayers, shortly.

I answered, "Obedience."

"Right," said he. "Be obedient to God and man, and you'll be sure to get on."

"Perhaps you'll be a corporal some of these days," said Sally.

"If I come back a corporal," said I, "will you have anything to say to me?"

She laughed, and said, "We'll see about it when the time comes. And, Bob, come and wish us good-bye before you go, and I'll give you two new pocket-handkerchiefs."

Which she did; and also a little book, with a text for every day in the year, small enough to carry always about me. And a very great comfort I found it on sentry-go; for I learnt the texts, one by one, till, at last, I knew them almost all, and could repeat them as I paced to and fro.

By the time I had been well drilled, the Crimean war broke out; and to my great joy, our division was ordered to the East. I went to take leave of Sally; and, considering it was my last visit, her father was kind enough to ask me to take tea with them, and treated me to eggs and bacon; but to see her was the greatest treat. She said, "Perhaps you will come back a corporal."

I said, "Perhaps with an arm or leg the less."

"Oh, we will not think of such dismal things," said Sally; "you might meet with an accident in London, any day of the week; and if you get wounded, and return invalided, we shall all think the more of you."

I did get wounded, pretty often, as it came to pass; first at the Alma, where our men behaved very gallantly. Seeing a Russian artillery-man urging his horses out of the fight, I ran up and got hold of them, and the man jumped down and ran away, and I captured the gun. For this I was afterwards thanked, but I did not get hurt in doing it; only a ball hit my ankle afterwards, and hurt me preciously. I was made lance-corporal, and had a good mind to write and tell Sally.

We spent two days in moving the wounded to the ships, but my ankle did not oblige me to lay up; and I should not have mentioned it at all, except for the sake of saying I did not leave the field unhurt. We got on to Balaklava, and in a few weeks moved up to the heights of Sebastopol, and began the siege. Here I was in the rear till the battle of Balaklava was fought, when we were ordered down to support the troops in the valley. In the course of the action, I had the good luck to be of service to a lieutenant-colonel, who

was lying dangerously wounded, in an exposed situation, and to save him from bleeding to death by bandaging his wounds, which were several, with his handkerchief and my own, under the heavy fire of the enemy, and then getting him on my back and carrying him off, which was no such easy matter; because he was taller than me, and I was bleeding a good deal. For this I was afterward scommended for cool and conspicuous so-and-so. It elated me a good deal, and gave me a lift in the eyes of others; but they would have done the same if they had had the opportunity. Soon after, I was full corporal.

Didn't I wish Sally knew it! but I thought I might as well go on now and get made a sergeant, which I was safe to do, soon or late, unless I got killed. And I was made lance-sergeant, just before the battle of Inkermann.

That was on a Sunday morning, the fifth of November, as I suppose you recollect. During the previous night, we had heard a heavy sound, as if of carts going towards Sebastopol; but it was the artillery of fifty thousand Russians, taking up a position to our right.

We got no breakfast that Sunday morning, for we had other fish to fry. At daybreak the alarm was given by our sentries; and when our troops moved out, expecting nothing but skirmishers, we found ourselves opposed to dense columns, and had scarcely time to form. Then the battle came on hot and quick. I can give you no account of it, only knowing what passed immediately round me. There was a cannonade all along the Russian line, and along our line too; but theirs was the loudest, they had so many more guns. At one time, there was the Duke of Cambridge galloping along the front, calling on the men to fire; and running the gauntlet of the whole line.

When the *mélée* became general, we got so mixed up with the Russians, that it was every man for himself and God for us all. At one time I had three Russians upon me at once, with my foot on the back of another. A brave French officer came to my rescue: and yet I got a medal afterwards, and he did not, for he was killed before the end of the campaign.

I was so badly wounded that time, that there was nothing for it but to go into hospital, and I was shipped off, with ever so many others, to Scutari, where Miss Nightingale, and the other good ladies, were preparing for us as fast as they could, stuffing bed-cases with chopped straw, and laying them all round the wards, on the floor, about a foot apart, only leaving a passage down the middle. I had to lie twenty-four hours on the bare ground in one of the corridors till a bed could be given me; but I had suffered so much on the voyage, that the hospital seemed heaven in comparison. Many hours passed before I could be attended to;

but then a good lady came, and cut my hair, and washed my wounds, and gave me a clean shirt, and shook up a pillow for me, and gave me some arrowroot, and sprinkled me with *eau-de-Cologne*.

Then, when night came, and we were all in the dark, a little twinkling light appeared in the distance, drawing nearer and nearer; and it was a lamp carried by Miss Florence Nightingale, that pitying angel, whose footsteps fell like snow; and when she had passed, I kissed her shadow as it fell on my pillow. Every night she passed, all alone, through *four miles of beds*!

To make a long story short, many died, and many got well; and I was one of the latter. In the spring, I was sent home to England. The voyage did me much good, for, as the doctor said, I had youth and a fine constitution in my favour.

How the people cheered us when we got to Southampton! and again at every railway station, on our way up to London. My idea had always been, that it would be such a proud moment when I presented myself to Sally in our alley, a full sergeant who had received thanks before all his regiment; and I had pictured her all smiles, and myself neat and clean and smart, and worth her looking at. But here was I, travel-stained and toil-worn, slashed and gashed, and looking old before my time—and when I got to our alley, the stall was shut up, and Sayers was dead, and Sally was 'gone! Oh, the tears sprang into my eyes! "Where is she?" I said. They said she was gone into service, and gave me her direction. I went off to the house, and rang the bell; and Sally opened the door. Directly she saw me, she burst out crying. I took her to my heart, and kissed her, more than once, I assure you.

When we had stopped crying, "Sally," said I, "I'm a sergeant now, and have got leave to marry. Will you have me?"

"Why, to be sure I will," said she, laughing through her tears, "if you don't think I'm too old."

"Too old! no, to be sure," said I; "you are just the right age, and I'm not too young, neither, for this war has much aged me."

"Do come in," says Sally; "I'm sure my mistress will let you."

So I went down into the kitchen, and Sally went and told her mistress, and her mistress came down into the kitchen, and asked me no end of questions, and praised me, and was very kind; and, afterwards, the gentleman came home and had me up into the dining-room, and asked me all about the war, and said he considered me a hero. He asked me how I was going to be rewarded, and I said, I believed I was to have a medal from the Queen, and that Sally had promised to marry me. If you think that was not reward enough, you make a mistake.

MY CHESTNUTS.

IVE a cottage just far enough out of the town
To give me a garden of flowers and fruits;
And near to my gate, with their arms
sweeping down,

Two sturdy horse-chestnuts bow pleasing salutes.

My study's one window looks out on those trees;
There pleasure and pastime I evermore find;
And my eyes thither wander for comfort and ease,
When by working fatigued, or to idlesse inclined.

When tender leaves droop from the latest-born spray,
Soft yearnings I feel stir my innermost man;
When spikes of fair bloom climb their summits in
May,

I feel youth as strong as when youth first began.

And if some city truant, for dear ones at home—

Not seeking permission—is tempted to take

A handful of leaves, or a spray of their bloom,

I pardon the act for humanity's sake.

With foliage thickened and broadened by June,
Old age in their shadow may rest and grow cool;
And they shelter afford when a shower at noon
Overtakes merry youngsters returning from school.

The bright cheery prattle those children ring out
I welcome with partly raised sash, till I fain
Could join the wild rogues in their laughter and shout
As some well-sprinkled laggard comes in from the
rain.

New phases of fairness my eyes shall behold,
Fresh food for reflection my heart shall have found,
When Autumn shall touch their deep green into gold,
And scatter their long 'prisoned fruit on the
ground.

And when Winter shall sit in their branches all bare,
Nor doubt nor deploring his presence shall bring;

No! the spirit of beauty, but slumbering there,

I shall know will awake at the first touch of
Spring. J. G. WATTS.

RATIONALISM.

FEW persons have any adequate conception of the extent of the influence which words exercise over our thoughts. It was long a question in the schools of philosophy whether language were necessary for carrying on any process of reasoning; and if not absolutely necessary, to what extent it was so. We believe it is now pretty generally acknowledged that when the subjects of our thoughts go beyond mere individuals, and embrace general conceptions, language is an indispensable instrument and auxiliary to our reasoning powers, and the instrument is one that constantly reacts upon the mind that uses it, and against which the most cautious reasoner requires continually to be on his guard. More especially in this age of ours, characterised beyond all others by a spirit of hurry, is it necessary to examine occasionally the meaning and force of the principal terms made use of in its leading controversies.

The skilful sophist is fully alive to the great influence of words, and turns it frequently to his own advantage. Witness the use often made by political declaimers of party names, when these are not wholly unmeaning in themselves, as is the case with such badges as "Whig" and "Tory," so far as most people are concerned. The sophistical Conservative makes use of the name of his party against those who would deny that they yield to him in affection for the Constitution as it has been handed down from our forefathers, or in desire to preserve it in all its essential features uninjured

and unchanged: whilst the disingenuous Liberal makes political capital out of his party denomination to the detriment of those who would disclaim equally with himself the adoption of any narrow or illiberal principles. Similarly with respect to the shibboleths of the numerous parties which, unhappily, exist within the Church's bosom. Compare, for example, the names "Evangelical" and "Church" party, and the use constantly made of each by its adherents. Nor is the evil confined to the pale of orthodoxy. The name "Unitarian" has often to be protested against in argument when used, as it often is, as if Unitarians alone believed in the existence of *one* God, and as if "Trinitarian" were synonymous with "Tritheist." The word of most dangerous and insidious influence in our day is that which we have placed at the head of this article; and it is our aim to make a few observations which may place the real bearings of the case with respect to it in their proper light.

It is a truth acknowledged by all who have thought sufficiently deeply on the subject to have come to any conclusion at all, that man, as situated on this earth, lives surrounded by insoluble enigmas on every side—enigmas of which the unlettered many, indeed, unaccustomed to reflection, are wholly unaware, though they are perfectly alive to what are, in truth, nothing but analogous difficulties in the case of religion. This latter class are by no means insensible to the speculative difficulties involved in the doctrine of the Trinity, or that of a special Providence, or

any of the other doctrines of Revelation so commonly assailed at the present day. But if you endeavour to convince those not used to such considerations of the mysteries involved in our conception of substance as distinct from attributes, or of the mode in which mind acts on matter or matter on mind, they will probably be more astonished at any one finding a difficulty in the subject than in the inexplicable secret itself. To such persons, as Bishop Berkeley observes, "nothing that is familiar appears unaccountable or difficult to comprehend." Yet we know that the most gifted intellects of all ages have found in these things problems which they have in vain endeavoured to solve, and which have baffled the utmost powers of human thought. Philosophy is of use in laying bare to us the difficulty in each case in all its inscrutable mystery, and showing us that we are surrounded on every side by such. That this is the aim, or, if not the aim, at least the result of all genuine philosophy, is now so well understood, that one of the most illustrious of modern philosophers (the late Sir W. Hamilton) asserts its end to be nothing more or less than "a learned ignorance." And all the attempts ever made by the unaided reason of man to solve for itself the mystery of existence—attempts in which most of the adventurous spirits of humanity, from the earliest dawn of speculation down to our own times, have engaged—have ended only in teaching man to "keep within the limits of the knowable"*

It should be clearly understood and distinctly proclaimed by all who contrast the respective provinces of reason and faith, that no slight is thereby cast on the former, and that none of its legitimate utterances is intended to be either shunned or ignored. When the Christian philosopher would set limits to the exercise of reason, they are none other than reason herself teaches him to lay down; and in observing those limits we are acting on the strictest principles of reason, and show ourselves to be rationalists in the true sense of the term. This ought to be constantly borne in mind, lest any one should imagine that the protests of religious writers against certain so-called rationalistic speculations proceed from any fear of the legitimate conclusions of the noble intellectual faculty of man, or from any dread that the evidences of our holy faith or its doctrines (so far as the doctrines are not of a transcendental nature) should not bear the test of the closest scrutiny of the reason.

It would be a most mistaken notion to oppose, for one single moment, faith to the legitimate exercise of human reason. With no legitimate exercise of man's intellect is faith at variance; with each lawful aspiration of right reason has

true faith ever sympathised, and in each step in the mental and moral progress of man has faith rejoiced. It is only from the futile discussion of questions inaccessible to human reason, from vain attempts to transcend the limits of human thought, that faith would restrain the rash speculator; and in this it is at one with right reason, and its warning voice is echoed by all the practical instincts of our nature. It would keep man back from foolish attempts to solve insoluble enigmas, and from wasting his strength in the vain endeavour to explain what man cannot, in his present state, completely understand, and would thus leave his faculties and energies to be applied to other subjects where their efforts may be available for the benefit and advancement of humanity. Thus faith, so far from being adverse to the advance of civilisation, as some would represent it, does, in fact, aid its progress most materially, by checking the fruitless wanderings of man's faculties, and leaving them to be concentrated on subjects of practical importance. How materially, for example, might not many of the eminent rationalistic philosophers of Germany have aided the progress of useful knowledge and solid learning amongst their countrymen and mankind at large, if, instead of soaring in quest of the absolute and infinite into regions where they were lost in the clouds, they had been content to apply their faculties to the attainment of some less daring but more useful objects? Thus it has been with the brightest ornaments of our land; they accepted the teaching of faith where speculations are vain and fruitless, and so were enabled to devote their undistracted mental energies to the noble efforts which they made to advance the cause of philosophy and of mankind. The glorious results that crowned their efforts we need not pause to describe.

These assertions, however, can only be made of a genuine and enlightened faith. That a blind, unthinking faith is not a desirable thing must be immediately manifest from a review of the state of Europe during the Middle Ages, called by some, in a spirit of derision, "the Ages of Faith." It must be confessed that mankind, with but few exceptions, were at that period steeped in an ignorant and unquestioning credulity, fettered in soul and intellect, and led willing captives by a designing and imperious priesthood. But it would be a libel on the name to call this faith. It was not the enlightened following of the dictates of Revelation—the sober and rational trust in that sacred guide given to man by his Creator—but the unthinking acquiescence and implicit reliance of those who were too ignorant or too listless to question the nature of the guide that led them. The time at length came when humanity awoke from the dream of ages, and when reason and

* Goethe.

thought asserted their rightful authority. A blessed result followed, but it has not been an unalloyed blessing. It was, indeed, naturally to be expected that when mankind had shaken off the shackles with which Popery had long fettered all the energies of the mind and soul, the limit would not be exactly observed which it often requires a bitter and a dear-bought experience to teach. So it has been with all the great blessings which the human race enjoys; so it has been with the precious gift of liberty; so it has been with the diffusion of knowledge; and so, alas! it has been with freedom of religious thought. With some specious form of each, evil has always managed for some time to join itself. But the evil is only accidental and abnormal, whilst the good is of the very essence of freedom. Let us hope that it will be so with that freedom of thought which we have enjoyed since the Reformation, and that men, having indulged in vain the efforts of the unbridled rational faculty to solve those mysteries of Nature and of Providence which are placed beyond the reach of human thought, may at length fall back on the modest conclusions of sober and chastised reason, whose every verdict is in strictest harmony with the beliefs of real faith.

So much is talked about faith and belief in connection with the Christian religion, that some may be led to imagine they are required nowhere else, and that irreligion and infidelity emancipate from all claims on their behalf. But there cannot be a greater mistake. On a calm and impartial examination of the subject—which, however, cannot be entered upon here—it will be found, and has more than once been proved, that the real credulity is exhibited by those free-thinkers who scoff at the common story of Christianity, and prefer to follow the guidance of their own more enlightened moral faculty. Though they boast the rationality of their creed, and scorn the exercise of faith, yet the number of paradoxes which their theories involve is so great as to require an amount of faith, in comparison to which that demanded by Christianity sinks into almost complete insignificance. Every one of their numerous and mutually contradictory theories as to the rise and progress of the religion of Jesus, needs for its reception a degree of faith which one looks for in vain outside the pale of Rationalism, so called. A remark made by Mr. J. S. Mill with reference to another class of persons, forcibly applies to each of these, that he is "as obstinate in his contemptuous incredulity as he is unreasonably credulous. Anything unlike his own narrow experience he disbelieves if it flatters no propensity; any nursery tale is swallowed by him implicitly if it does."

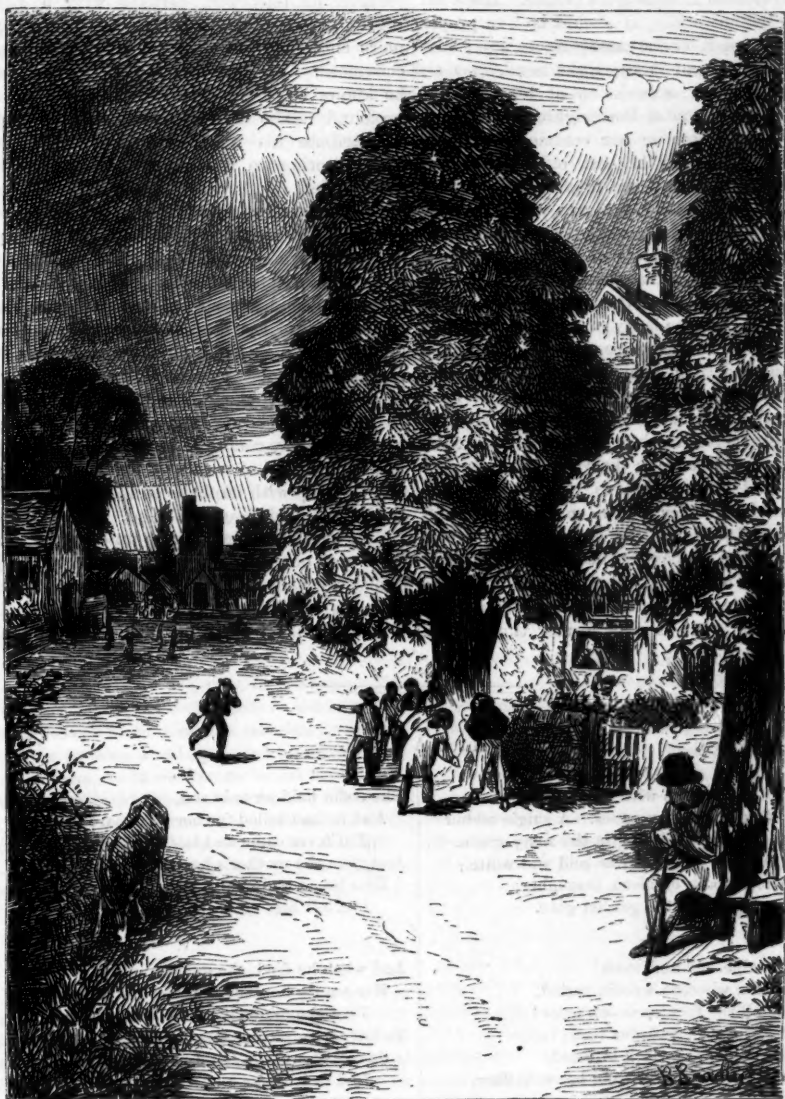
It is a curious fact indeed, not less true, however, than curious, that infidelity and credulity have ever shown a sympathy for each other, and that fre-

quently the same age, and often the same character, is equally remarkable for the display of both. This has been remarked by an ancient historian with respect to the manners of Rome at the period of the Gothic invasion. "There are many who do not presume either to bathe or to dine, till they have diligently consulted, according to the rules of astrology, the situation of Mercury, and the aspect of the moon. It is singular enough that this vain credulity may often be discovered among the profane sceptics, who impiously doubt or deny the existence of a Celestial Power."*

Coming down to later times, "It is a remarkable fact," observes Dugald Stewart, in one of the notes to his "Dissertation on the Progress of Philosophy," "that the same period of the eighteenth century, and the same part of Europe, which were most distinguished by the triumphs of atheism and materialism, were also distinguished by a greater number of visionaries and impostors than had ever appeared since the revival of letters. Nor were these follies confined to persons of little education. They extended to men of the highest rank, and to many individuals of distinguished talents." And with reference to still more recent times, "Let this fact be noted," says Isaac Taylor ("Ultimate Civilisation," &c.), "that at the very time when men of education were professing their disregard of the most conclusive reasoning in support of those great truths which are the resting-places of moral and intellectual philosophy, they might be seen foremost among the gaping listeners that surrounded the mountebank and the conjurer, who said he had his special correspondent in the regions of the dead. Atheism and Credulity are man and wife; or brother and sister; or whatever be the relationship which holds them in company; so it is that wherever the male of the two—Atheism—makes his appearance, the easy-tempered lady—Credulity—follows close upon his heels."

We call many of the votaries of both in our day by the name of Rationalists, and some are hence led to imagine that most of the results which we deplore in the religious speculations of recent times have sprung from following too closely the guidance of Reason. But can we believe that it is Reason—staid, sober, sacred Reason—that has wildly attempted, on the wings of daring and presumption, to soar aloft to the very heights of Essential Being, until, acted on by the influence of that rarer atmosphere, it has madly proclaimed its own apotheosis, and even fallen down prostrate in adoration of itself? No! we cannot believe it. Reason has been ejected from its throne, and seven other spirits, the offspring of Ignorance and of Pride, have usurped its place: and there, under the sanction of its honoured name, and by the weight of its sacred authority, have exercised their

* Gibbon, from Ammianus Marcellinus.



(Drawn by E. BRADLEY.)

"As some well-sprinkled laggard comes in from the rain."—p. 273.

baneful influence on man's fortunes and belief. But there is yet a stronger than they—One who, when he walked our earth, ejected demons by his word from their usurped dominion of the human soul, and restored Reason to its throne. His word is equally potent still. It should be our prayer that He may use it for the same purpose now; that so man, clothed, and in his right mind, may sit once more in meek submission at his feet. In such a posture, many of the brightest ornaments that ever shed lustre on our common humanity have thought it their highest privilege to sit. When one calls to mind the intellectual giants of bygone days—those lofty geniuses whose appearance on the stage of the world marked out eras in the history of the progress of the human mind, and whose powerful influence will continue to be felt to the latest ages; when one contemplates their humility, and the lowly reverence with which they bowed their heads before the sacred mysteries of religion, and then compares with theirs the procedure of the intellectual "pigmies" of later times—as Chalmers truthfully calls them—he cannot but be surprised at their arrogance, and at the overweening confidence in their own powers manifested in all their productions. They exceed the mighty minds of other days as much in their self-confidence and pride, as they fall short of them in depth of thought, in powers of comprehension, and in originality of genius. Our modern would-be philosopher is not to be satisfied in such an easy manner as the great men of former times were.

His lofty intellect must be convinced by other arguments than those which satisfied the minds of Bacon, Locke, Newton, Pascal, Leibnitz, and Butler; and as such arguments are not forthcoming, he tells you, perhaps with a sigh of regret, that the profundity of his mind, and his more enlarged views, compel him to remain unconvinced. But the reader or the listener, if he knows anything of the history of the really profound minds of the world, may be inclined to attribute his unbelief to some other cause less flattering to the ability and rationality of the sceptic.

Reason leads us on through many of the paths of life; but it reaches a limit which it cannot pass, a barrier beyond which all is darkness to its eye; and here Reason ceases its guidance, being convinced, on solid grounds, of its inability to lead us further, and of the need there is to man of some other guide to lead him on his onward way. But Reason gives not up its charge before it has examined the credentials of that guide which is to conduct us through the gloom, and found that it is a Divinely-commissioned, and, consequently, unerring leader, to whose guidance we may yield ourselves up with implicit confidence. This guide is the revealed Word of God, intended by its Divine Author to be "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path" as we traverse those regions of obscurity through which "nor Fancy's flash nor Reason's ray," nor ought else than the light of heavenly truth itself, can guide us safely to the end.

A CAROL.

I.

A TAPER shone with feeble light
Through broken panes. A single ember
Was smouldering in the rusty grate.
Outside the snow was cold and white;
And the keen tooth of bleak December
Was chattering at the garden gate.

II.

An oaken table, old and worn,
Two chairs, whereon a coffin rested,
Made all the furniture—no more!
The paper from the wall was torn;
Great spiders every nook infested,
Or swung themselves from beam to floor.

III.

Two bodies, dead, were in the room,
One in the coffin, and one lying
Upon the hearthstone, near the light,
And by the taper's glare and gloom,
That on the floor seemed yet a-dying,
So quiet was the face and white.

IV.

The coffin held an only son,
And he had toiled for her who reared him,
Till fever came and laid him low.
And then the mother's hand had won
Him bread and help. Though others feared him,
She left him not—she loved him so

V.

And when he died, she gathered up
Her scanty household goods and sold them,
That she might have the wherewithal
To bury him. Then was her cup
So full of woes it could not hold them,
And so it broke and lost them all.

VI.

'Twas a plain burial she meant
To have found him, yet her heart was very
Wishful that honour should be done;
But death despoiled her good intent,
And there was no one left to bury
Her light of life—her darling son.

VII.

The coffin-lid was near her feet,
And the last look her eyes had taken,
Ere death, was on her boy's dead face.
No more their hearts in sorrow beat,
Their troubles now are all forsaken,
Their home is in the Holy Place.

VIII.

Together all the night they lay,
And in the morn—'twas New Year's morning—
Some passing neighbours found them there.

Then footsteps came and went away,
And many a mother's sob of mourning
Was heard upon the creaking stair.

IX.

Yet not in sadness ends my lay
Of patient sorrow. It shall even
Be told to cheer some heart forlorn.
It truly was a New Year's Day!
They went to sleep in grief one even,
And woke with Christ on New Year's morn.

BURTON WOLLASTON.

DEEPPDALE VICARAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK WARREN."

CHAPTER LI.

THE COUNTESS HAS LEARNED HER LESSON WELL.

WHEN Frank was gone, the Lady Lucy lay upon the sofa, somewhat exhausted, for the feebleness incident to her late illness was clinging to her. Her fair head rested on the cushions, her hands were clasped, her eyes fixed, as though the mind were abstracted from all around it. A smile of intense happiness played about her mouth. And Lucy was happy!

Her life had hitherto been a joyless one. She had, it is true, that abiding peace of soul which the world can neither give nor take; but the heart will crave for human sympathy and affection. That necessity is part of our common nature. The want of this had been Lucy's daily cross—the grief of her young life, until there came—Frank Chauncey! Ah! then it was like the sun rising on some bleak, chill landscape, and making it warm, and bright, and beautiful.

He had come, as it seemed, to be her friend and solace. A tear trickled down her cheek as she called to mind the many instances of his affection, mutely expressed, but understood now. Understood well! Then happened to her that fiery trial, out of which she had barely come forth scatheless. And what of Frank then? Amid those dreadful scenes of unconsciousness, the mind now and then had a lucid interval; and in that moment's calm, the great waves seeming to surge all around, was it not Frank's face that she beheld? Did she not know that he was beside her? Did it not occur to her that his skill, his patience, his tenderness, were put forth on her behalf? Humanly speaking, she would have died, but for Frank! Then, coming back, as it were, to life, who was the first that met her? Frank! Had she forgotten that joyful, anxious face bending over her?—had she forgotten its expression of fidelity and love? No! never, never!

And now the smile became more blissful; the eyes were radiant with hope. Now, she must lie and think of that happy future. She loved him; she knew full well how he loved her! Their feelings, their tastes,

their habits, their very thoughts were in unison. How serene would be their home! The wings of domestic peace would brood over it. No neglect now; no weary days; no yearning for affection; no solitude; no grief. God had sent her this great boon, and she would receive it with thankfulness and praise.

From all this, it is clear that Lady Lucy was intending to bestow her hand on Frank Chauncey. She had not thought of the imperial will of the Landons, or of the views they might be disposed to take of the matter. Her imagination soared above every impediment whatever; but, even while she soared, she had a reminder which brought her down towards this terrestrial sphere.

As she lay musing, surrounded by tender thoughts and golden expectations, in marched the Big Countess. Lucy started from her dreams. She felt afraid, she scarce knew of what. The soft ideas that had been hovering round her took wing like a flock of doves.

"Well, Lucy," said the countess, standing in all her magnitude by the side of her daughter, "and how do ye feel now?"

This was a favourite question of the countess, and was intended to express solicitude. Lucy would have risen, but this her mother would not permit.

"Lie still—Lucy; lie still. I am only come to sit with you for a while." And the countess sat down in the chair which had been recently occupied by Lucy's lovers. "You'll soon be all right, Lucy, shan't you?"

"I hope so, mamma."

But this was not what the countess came to say. After she had sat a few minutes, she bent forward, her face keenly inquisitive.

"Lucy, what has passed between you and Sir Geoffrey?"

Lucy was prepared for this question. She had seen it on the lips of her imperial mother the moment she came in.

Smiling and yet blushing, not at the thought of him, but at the vivid remembrance of the other, she replied that Sir Geoffrey had taken his departure.

"His departure, Lucy!—for good?"

"I think so, mamma."

The countess sat a few minutes, as if she were

digesting this piece of intelligence. Then she looked somewhat ruefully at her daughter.

"Lucy, I hope you won't be an old maid!"

The carmine deepened on face and neck. Lucy turned aside somewhat, to avoid the gaze of her mother.

"Because—well, you're young yet, Lucy; but I shall be glad to see ye settled, for all that."

Lucy uttered not a word.

"You must not be whimsical, Lucy, and fancy this won't do, and that won't do. If a suitable husband presents himself, you had better by half make up your mind to marry him."

The blood came surging again to Lucy's temples. Should she, dare she tell her mother? Her mother must be told, assuredly. Frank would have to tell her, if she did not. Somehow, her heart failed her. She was weak, she was ill. Those bright illusions had been darkened by the presence of the countess.

"I am not an unreasonable mother," continued her ladyship, curiously oblivious of the past; "I am always anxious for my children's happiness, and any one that you think you might like——"

She stopped abruptly. Lucy had half-risen from the sofa. She was pale as death, and there was a wild, eager look in her eyes that terrified her mother.

"Lucy! my child—my child! what is it?" cried she, rising hastily, and with open arms.

"Mother!" cried Lucy, with a suddenness and a vehemence quite unusual to her, "I have chosen; I do love! I love Frank Chauncey!"

She was in her mother's arms by this time, weeping and trembling, and uttering incoherent words, and expostulations, and entreaties.

But she need not have so wept and so entreated. The time of tyranny had overpast. The countess had learned a bitter lesson, and learned it well. She pressed Lucy to her heart, and wept over her. And for Frank Chauncey—had he not saved her child?

CHAPTER LII.

WHAT SIMON CROSSKEYS WANTED.

NIGHT is usually the time selected for a conspiracy to be hatched; and so it was in the plot of Nathanael Lewin and Simon Crosskeys. It was on a sultry August night, when neither moon nor stars were to be seen, that Simon Crosskeys made his way to the abode of his colleague. His face was unusually cheerful, his step was brisk, and, now and then, he gave a short whistle; for at length, after all this delay and suppression, his hour had come—to Clara Melrose, the hour of doom!

That morning, the countess and her daughters had taken their departure. As he passed the Manor, some hours ago, he had noticed with satisfaction that the blinds were drawn down, and that the place seemed deserted. All the better for the scheme of Simon Crosskeys! Nor was the countess likely to return at present. It was her intention to spend some time on the Welsh coast, and then to pass over to Ireland.

The wedding of Lady Blanche, it was now understood, would not take place till November, and not until November would the family return to the Manor. During that whole period would the protector of Clara Melrose be away. Phil, it is true, would remain at the cottage. The countess could not find it in her heart to take him from his *Greek*!

But who or what was Phil, as opposed to the strong arm of justice?

Justice! That was what Simon Crosskeys wanted!

He found his friend and comrade sitting by the empty fireplace, smoking his pipe. Simon went in and closed the door. The conspirators did not wish even their wives to know what they were about. "The women would be sure to tattle it all over the place," said they. Nathanael Lewin held out his hand to Simon Crosskeys. There was a kind of freemasonry about the thing altogether.

"Well?" said Nathanael Lewin, looking significantly at Mr. Crosskeys.

"Well?" said Mr. Crosskeys, looking with equal significance at Nathanael Lewin.

Crosskeys sat down opposite his friend. It was a warm night, and he pulled out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead. Then he put it back, and leaning forward, whispered—pointing his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the Manor—

"She's gone!"

"I see she was," replied Nathanael Lewin, with a confidential nod.

"Ah!" said Crosskeys, "and time she did."

"Exactly," replied Nathanael Lewin.

This must not be construed into disloyalty towards the countess. It simply meant, as Crosskeys went on to say, that it allowed them to act as they pleased.

"And we won't be done again," added he, savagely.

"Never likely," replied Mr. Lewin, between the puffs of his tobacco.

Nathanael Lewin was a man who smoked under every possible circumstance.

All this bye-play was only introductory. Now came the plot.

"If you'll just lay down that there pipe, Mr. Lewin, and listen to me, I'll tell you what to do."

Mr. Lewin laid it down immediately.

"I am sure I beg your pardon, Mr. Crosskeys."

"There is no occasion to do that, Mr. Lewin. A pipe is all very well. I've no earthly objections to tobacco; but when we've such a weighty matter on hand, why it isn't a time for smoking—as I take it."

"Say on, Mr. Crosskeys, say on," cried Nathanael Lewin, glancing somewhat ruefully at his half-finished pipe, "I'm all attention."

Mr. Crosskeys, who had long and carefully studied his part, then did say on. This time, the principal mover in the conspiracy was to be his friend Lewin.

Somehow, Crosskeys did not feel inclined to make a second trial of starting off to Mansfield. Perhaps he thought there was a fatality about it. At any rate, it was agreed that Nathanael Lewin should set off, in good time, the next morning. Crosskeys was to hover about the cottage in order to prevent un-

looked-for circumstances, or the slightest hope of escape. It was easy to do this, as he was carrying corn in the next field.

"And I'd have waited till harvest was over, if I'd dared," said he.

Nathanael Lewin shook his head.

"Crosskeys," said he, emphatically, "we've waited too long already!"

Arrived at Mansfield, Lewin was to apply to the magistrates, get a warrant, and bring back with him an officer of justice, in order to apprehend the widow. So resolved were they upon her total destruction!

"Root and branch," again repeated Simon Crosskeys, "root and branch!"

CHAPTER LIII.

GONE FOR THE POLICE.

ABOUT eleven o'clock on the following morning, the door of the vicarage opened, and out stepped Dionysius Curling. It was evident from his appearance and manner, that something of importance was about to take place. He had on a new suit of clothes; his face wore a holiday expression; his hair and beard were brushed and anointed to perfection, and a rose was fastened into his button-hole. He was scarcely the same individual as at the commencement of our story.

He walked briskly along, with a gay almost jocund air; for, at length, his hour had come. He was about to make a proposal of marriage to Clara Melrose. He had been carrying on the courtship, after his own fashion. His visits to the cottage had been regular as the day, and, sometimes, of more than an hour's duration.

Any other man would, ere this, have popped out the important question. But not so Dionysius Curling. He must move in a certain orbit, or not move at all. "A series of delicate attentions," he would say; "then the declaration." It had come, now, to the declaration.

His affection had gone on increasing, day by day. The more he saw of her, the more he loved her. As he walked along, he mused over the golden hours he had spent in that little garden. Hours, such as had never fallen to his lot before. He thought she loved him—nay, he had almost made sure of it. His supposed rival, Mr. Chauncey, had been taken providentially out of his way. Even Phil had, during his sister's illness, been absent from the cottage. These circumstances were greatly in favour of Dionysius Curling.

Clara Melrose had him, and him alone! He could sit with her for long blissful hours. He could watch the play of her nimble fingers, as she busied herself in some feminine employment. He could note every look and every movement. He could rejoice in the uninterrupted presence of her whom he loved.

But if the reader supposes that this blissful state of mind was apparent, he is mistaken. Dionysius was still slow, and pompous, and though to a certain extent improved, he verified the truth of the proverb,

that an Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots. Nothing could make Dionysius Curling demonstrative.

This morning, however, it must be confessed, that his manner was more excited than it had ever been before. He had prepared an oration for the learned ears of Clara Melrose. But his mind would break away from the formalities of speech, and lead him captive towards the sunny land of promise. What years of happiness lay before him, with this woman for his wife! It was not *learning* now, but *love*; the heart, not the head!

Thinking thus, he quickened his pace. The morning was oppressive. A mist hung on the distant hills, and clouds loomed overhead. Still, he hurried on. No atmospheric influences had power, just then, to affect him.

There was the cottage with its climbing roses, and sweet-scented clematis. In a very short time, all would be over. He would be at her feet. He would have promised to cherish and defend her, unto his life's end!

Occupied in these tender musings, and an expression of almost ecstatic delight beaming from his face, a turn in the road brought him in full view of Simon Crosskeys.

Simon was coming to meet him.

Dionysius was hardly able to account for it, but a presentiment of evil came upon him like an electric shock. Perhaps the very sight of Simon Crosskeys, had that tendency.

And what did the serpent do here, in the trail of Dionysius Curling's joy?

He made a civil recognition, and would have passed on, but Simon Crosskeys stopped just in front of him, and stopped with the air of a man who is about to make a revelation.

Dionysius had no alternative but to stop likewise.

Simon Crosskeys had scanned the vicar from top to toe. His eye had surveyed with a glance of meaning the well-oiled locks, the rose at the button-hole, the suit of new broadcloth, the boots shining with polish; all this, we say, he took in at a glance; and when he had taken it in, he smiled. It was a smile which provoked Dionysius excessively. It let out, as plainly as a smile could, that his politics, be they never so well concealed, lay all open to the eyes of Simon Crosskeys. Simon Crosskeys knew that he was going courting, and to whom.

"Hark ye, Mr. Curling!" said he, presently.

Dionysius writhed under the sound of the man's voice—a gruff voice at best, but in the present state of the vicar's nerves, unbearable.

"Hark ye! Mr. Curling," said Simon Crosskeys, "you don't suppose us plain folks in Deepdale is going to be hoodwinked much longer? Shall I tell you a bit of news, sir?"

Dionysius raised his head haughtily. His first impulse was to brush by his tormentor, whether or no. But the lane was narrow, and the person of Simon Crosskeys, planted right before him, presented an obstacle not easily surmounted.

"Mr. Lewin, sir, he's off to Mansfield. I'm expecting him back every minute. Pray, what's he gone for, Mr. Curling?"

"Indeed! how can I tell, Mr. Crosskeys? Will you allow me to proceed?" said Dionysius, still haughtily.

"Well then, sir, it's time as you was told. He's gone for the police."

Dionysius stared at him.

"The police, Mr. Crosskeys?"

"Exactly, sir—the police. They are going to take Mrs. Melrose to gaol!"

CHAPTER LIV.

SHE ASKS TO KNOW THE WORST.

THE face of Dionysius Curling underwent one of those violent changes akin to what sometimes takes place in Nature.

As we have seen a cloud burst over a smiling landscape, and desolate it with hail or tempest; as an avalanche thunders down upon the valley; as a volcano pours forth its destroying flood, so did all that was joyous in the fate of Dionysius Curling appear to perish.

To gaol! like a common felon! *She*, the woman he was about to choose, from amid all others, to be his wife!

Ah! while he had been sunning himself yonder, and culling all the sweet felicities of hope, the elements of destruction had been at work.

Secretly! Had he but known, he had not been caught in this snare, nor should she. They would have found means to escape. As he thought thus, he was already hurrying towards her.

Forsake her! No!—that was hardly likely. Was she not innocent, and a victim? Forsake her! sooner would he cut off his right hand, sooner would he lose all he had in the wide world! Be her fate what it might, he would share it with her.

Leaving Simon Crosskeys standing unnoticed, and unanswered too, forgetting his very existence, he hastened towards the cottage. As he approached it, he slackened his pace. Even now, his old habits forbade that he should come precipitately into her presence. Even now, he would maintain all the composure and dignity that he could.

She was sitting in the garden-chair, on the little lawn. The rustic seat near her was placed for Dionysius. Many happy mornings they had sat thus together.

A small table was by her side, on which was placed a nosegay, and some books. She herself was busy with her sewing. Very calm and beautiful she looked, as she sat! Over her head, the leaves of the great ash-tree gently rustled, and the petals of the climbing roses were scattered about her on the grass.

Beyond the garden, were the fields with their stacks of ripe corn, and the merry voices of the reapers were heard singing in the distance. It was a peaceful spot, until the convulsion should take place.

In a few minutes, she looked up and smiled, and

gave him a nod of welcome. There was no need for her to rise and go through the usual ceremonies. He was too constant a visitor for that.

She expected he would stroll up the garden, and seat himself as usual. She had laid down her work, in order to speak to him, in order to begin the pleasant familiar talk in which they were both skilled, by this time. But, from the first, she saw that something had happened.

He was unnaturally pale. His step told of agitation and alarm. As he came near, she dropped her work on the ground, and rose.

"What is the matter, Mr. Curling?" She said it kindly and anxiously. She thought he was ill. It did not occur to her that his agitation had reference to herself. She had been so secure, of late, under the wing of the countess.

By this time, he had reached the rustic seat. But he did not, as usual, take his place in it. He did not seem prepared to pass a happy and peaceful morning. Alas! no! Peace—happiness—these were not for him!

How could he tell her what would be her probable fate?

He took her hand. She was close by him, and making her, by a gentle movement, sit down, he stood over her, and began a few hurried sentences.

"The dispensations of Providence," he said, "are mysterious and inexplicable. Sometimes the innocent must suffer for the guilty."

The word *guilty* touched her to the quick. She seemed, all at once, to apprehend her danger. She started up, and glanced hastily round, as if about to fly. Then the immediate terror seemed to give place to another, and more courageous sentiment. She turned to him, and asked to know the worst.

He told her what had happened. There was no disguise, no subterfuge: there could be none. The fact, in all its native hideousness, must be laid open before her!

Dionysius Curling was, as we said from the beginning, a man destitute of resources. Even now, when the wretched woman was about to sink in the depths of ruin, it was to her he looked for counsel.

He had scarce finished his disastrous history, ere he asked her what they were to do? In the case of many women, the question would have been impossible to answer. Many women would have shrieked, and torn their hair, and fainted from sheer alarm; but this woman was of another stamp. She did not cling to him for succour; she did not faint; she did not weep. Pale, like some marble statue, embodying in its own form all the dignity of ancient sculpture, she raised her eyes to heaven. It was not a look of despair, nor of resistance, nor even of fear: it was a look of perfect trust and reliance upon her God!

For a moment, her thoughts seemed raised to a world where disgrace and oppression can never come.

If he had esteemed her innocent before, he was doubly convinced of it now.

Could guilt be in communion with Heaven?

(To be continued.)

ROGER PRESTON'S SNOWBALL.



HAPPY sort of intimacy had sprung up between Roger Preston and young Albert de Montpierre. They were both children, taking joy and happiness from almost everything, and perhaps this was the tie between them. Roger was the son of a farmer; and a comely boy he was, with his crisp black hair, and large dark eyes. But good looks simply would never have caused me to admire Roger as I did; it was the peculiar intelligence and animation in his countenance which, to my mind, invested it with beauty. Whatever he did and said was done and spoken earnestly.

Albert was a very different boy. In his appearance, figure, and movements there was that almost indefinable something to which we have given the name of aristocratic, and this something is very pleasing when it is free from affectation. Albert's father was a French count, and the little fellow had been sent over to England for his education, and was staying with his uncle, a wealthy English merchant, who lived in a splendid mansion, or rather castle, under the hill land, at the end of a beautiful valley.

The southern end of this valley was thickly wooded. There were oak-trees, and linden-trees, and weeping birch. There were some huge fir-trees, too, and one or two sturdy elms, standing out before these smaller trees, as if to protect them; but they were not so beautiful in their winter vestments as the more delicate ones, on whose tracery-work of boughs the snows rested like lines of sparkling crystals.

This valley was a favourite resort of Roger's. He made snowballs, and snowhouses, and sometimes snowmen, out of the white drift that lay shining there like silver. It used to be called "Snow Valley;" but after Albert's uncle had been living in the neighbourhood a while, it took the name of his house, and was called "Castle Valley."

Sometimes when Roger passed by the castle, especially at Christmas-time, he would stand still outside the iron gateway leading down the back road to the house, and listen to the music and merriment going on within, and long to be among the glittering lamps and the beautiful rooms, that looked, from what he could see of them outside, like fairy palaces.

"I wish I was brother to Albert de Montpierre, for then," he said to himself, wistfully, "I could sit, as he does, on crimson damask sofas, and play with my cousin, Louise Ashton."

But Roger was, on the whole, a good and contented boy, and these thoughts did not long distress him. When the frosty winter day was bright around him, he forgot all about the castle.

One Saturday, Roger was at play earlier than usual; it was a half-holiday at the village school. He must have played about there for more than an hour, when he saw Albert coming towards him. The wind was very keen, and the young French boy—who, as I have before said, was delicate—was buttoned up

to his eyes in wrappers and furs. Roger seated himself on the ground; made up a good-sized snowball to throw at his friend; but as Albert drew nearer, Roger Preston's purpose died away: the young gentleman looked so fragile, so pinched by the cold, that all Roger could do was to offer him the shining thing as a gift. He was not the least surprised when Albert shrunk from his present, drawing back from him, and clasping his thickly-gloved hands together, as if afraid of coming in contact with the snowball.

"You make yourself more and more delicate, Master Albert," Roger said, "by wrapping up like that."

Then Roger burst into a laugh—it was very unpolite to do so—and cried, "Felix, Felix," to the greyhound, who seemed more inclined to have some sport with the ball than his young master, "are you, too, wrapped up in furs?"

"I think my snowball very beautiful," Roger said, addressing Albert. "It is all very well for you, who live amid sparkling lamps and shining jewels, not to care for my ball; but look you, is it not shining in the sunlight, like so many real diamonds?"

"To be sure it is," answered Albert, good-naturedly. "My uncle's diamond ring never sparkled like that. I like to look at it, though I don't like to hold it; but I'll tell you what you shall do—you shall give it to my cousin Louise, at the castle."

Roger's eyes sparkled with delight.

"Oh, that will be nice!" he cried; "a rare bit of fun;" and in another minute they were running along together down the valley, towards the old castle. Both of them remembered, in long years after, that happy winter afternoon.

Louise met them at the door. She had just returned from a walk with her governess, and she laughed merrily at the idea of having a snowball for a present. It was a pretty sight to see her gladness and shamed-facedness—her delicate white fingers timidly put out to touch the snowball. The cold made them so crimped and rosy at the end, that the child laughed at her own hands; and after this feat she seemed more at her ease with the almost stranger boy, and asked him to bring his gift into the library. "She was sure she should drop it in the hall," she said, "if she attempted to take it herself."

Roger obeyed the young girl—not reluctantly, I assure you.

The fine Christmas-tree was in preparation, and Roger looked so wistfully at it, that Louise took the things off, one by one, and showed them to him. It was a great deal of trouble; but the pleasure she felt in doing this act of kindness compensated for it, and shed quite a light on her face. I think the plainest girl becomes pretty when doing an unselfish action, and Louise was not plain at any time.

All of a sudden Roger turned from the Christmas-tree, and looked with wide-open eyes at the vase—the empty vase—for the sparkling snowball had melted away.

Both the children were very sorry, and it was Albert's turn to laugh at them now. How could they expect the snowball to remain long in that warm room?

Albert was the eldest of the three, and he looked very wise when he said this; and I must say that Roger was a foolish boy, for all the way home he was downcast and sad because his snowball had melted away.

Ten years passed on. Albert had finished his education, and returned to France. In spite of all the monotony of home, there were changes there too, round about Louise.

From the time that Roger had been guilty of the childish act of taking the snowball to Louise, he had hankered more than ever after the castle, and the gay doings there.

At night, from his bedroom window at the farm, he would look out on the stars, and envy Albert, who, he said, must be watching them from the castle turret with Louise. Every thought or hope he possessed was connected with the merchant's daughter.

During those ten years he had been quite received into the family, and now was almost like an adopted child. Louise had taken a great fancy to Roger ever since the day of the snowball, and she was always asking her father to let him come and play with her; and how could he refuse his darling? I have before said that Roger was a most intelligent boy, and his coming to play with Louise ended in his receiving instruction from Mr. Ashton daily. He came of an evening, when the day's business was over, and made such rapid strides in education, that he was very soon, much to the annoyance of Albert, installed as a clerk in the office. When you saw Albert and Roger standing side by side, you felt that Nature had made a mistake, and set the impress of nobleman on the farmer's son, while she had withheld it from the count's son; for Albert's face was contracted and thin, and there was a pinched expression about his mouth and chin that Louise used to call mean.

It was just at the end of the ten years, dating from the gift of the snowball, that a strange delicacy seemed to fall on Louise. What was it? No doctor could tell; but she seemed to be fading away.

Her father was very anxious about the change in her appearance. Sitting late one evening with Roger, he thought that, after all, she might be in love with that handsome-looking young man, and might feel the case hopeless. As he sat there, leaning back in his soft, cushioned chair, there floated through his mind vague stories of girls who had died for love, and then he considered how all her pleasant, girlish talk with him was woven out of Roger; and as the handsome, honest-faced young man sat there at his side, he thought he might do worse than take him for a son-in-law.

There had been a time when he had thought of earls and dukes as worthy only of his rich child, but he had grown wiser lately; and there was something

about Roger that made the merchant feel he was rich without gold. So, after beating about the bush a little while, he got Roger to understand that he might sue for his child.

Then Roger opened to him all his heart, and told him how he had loved her throughout his life, but, from a sense of honour, would never speak of such love to her.

But Louise did not get better. She lingered for some time, and every evening Roger sat at her couch-side. And then the last day came, and the last hour of her short span of life. Her senses wandered, and she spoke of the snowball melting away. "But the Sun of Righteousness," she said, turning with ineffable tenderness to Roger, "will cheer your life when I am gone, just as the sun-rays brightened the snowball in the vase." She did not speak distinctly after this, and then she fell asleep!

The old man took to Roger greatly after his darling was gone, and made him partner in his business, giving him the half of all he had.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC ON PAGE 208.

"Elisha."—2 Kings ii. 10-17.

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| 1. E uroclodon | Acts xxvii. 14. |
| 2. L asea | Acts xxvii. 8. |
| 3. I rad | Gen. iv. 18. |
| 4. S ihon | Numb. xxi. 23. |
| 5. H uldah | 2 Kings xxii. 13, 14. |
| 6. A dmah | Deut. xxix. 23. |

KEY TO ENIGMA ON PAGE 208.

"Thine is the kingdom."—Matt. vi. 13.

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| 1. T irshatha | Neh. x. i. |
| 2. H asun | 2 Sam. x. 4. |
| 3. I shbi-benob | 2 Sam. xxi. 16. |
| 4. N ebo | Deut. xxxiv. 1. |
| 5. E leazar | 1 Chron. xi. 13. |
| 6. I ddo's | Zech. i. 1. |
| 7. S healtiel's | Hagg. i. 12. |
| 8. T ou | 1 Chron. xviii. 10. |
| 9. H ebron | 2 Sam. ii. 3, 4. |
| 10. E lath | 2 Kings xvi. 6. |
| 11. K enath | Numb. xxxii. 42. |
| 12. I shtob | 2 Sam. x. 6. |
| 13. N ethaniah's | Jer. xli. 6. |
| 14. G ibeon | 2 Sam. ii. 13. |
| 15. D avid | 1 Chron. xxi. 16. |
| 16. O bed | Ruth iv. 17. |
| 17. M aachab | 1 Kings xv. 13. |

SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC.

A FELLOW-HELPER WITH ST. PAUL.

1. An instance of leprosy.
2. One who opened the door to Peter.
3. A sorcerer of Cyprus.
4. One who sold to a king a threshing-floor.
5. A ruler of the Jews.
6. An altar erected by the Israelites in the time of Joshua.